



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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TESTIMONY

DATE: February 9, 2011

PRESENTED TO: Environment Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

PRESENTED BY: Karl J. Wagener
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Raised Bill 838, An Act Concerning Wildlife Management and
Lands Classified as Farm Lands

The Council recommends adoption of a Public Act 490 classification for lands managed for wildlife, but in a manner different from the raised bill.

There are Connecticut residents who, at considerable personal expense and for great public benefit, keep their land undeveloped and manage it for wildlife. However, the land does not always qualify for PA 490 classification as farmland, forestland or open space.

The current version of the bill, which puts certified wildlife lands into the agricultural classification, will not be popular, we have learned.

The Council urges you to create a separate classification under PA 490 for lands managed for wildlife. You can set the bar high, so people will not be tempted to abuse the classification. You should require the land to be managed according to a plan approved by a certified professional. This will cost the landowner some amount and should help to prevent abuse. There is no state certification for wildlife biologists, but the generally-accepted professional certification is that of Certified Wildlife Biologist, which is administered by the Wildlife Society. Certification of individuals is rigorous, and requiring the involvement of a Certified Wildlife Biologist fits the purpose better than a state-certified forestry professional.